

NATO Study Group

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[Overview of research]

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) achieved a major transformation after the Cold War in transcending its initial role as a collective defense organization. As can be seen from its activities in Afghanistan and elsewhere, it has been playing a major role in global as well as European security in recent years. NATO, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2009, is now in the midst of drafting a new strategic concept, showing that it is even now still in the process of transformation. There have been a variety of discussions among member countries, which now number 28, as to the future of NATO.

Given the recent international security environment, there will likely be a growing number of areas in which Japan and NATO could potentially cooperate, but NATO has thus far not necessarily seemed a familiar presence in Japan, where NATO's true circumstances have not been conveyed in much detail. Deepening understanding of NATO's current efforts and the issues confronting NATO both from within and without – e.g., the efforts of member countries making sacrifices to participate in operations while struggling to address domestic public opinion, the future vision that NATO is seeking to advance and differences in opinion over this among member countries – is extremely important in considering Japan-NATO relations.

Given this perspective, the NATO Study Group was established to help promote understanding and analysis of NATO's current status and prospects – changes in NATO's mission, developments in the NATO policies of several major member nations, the ties between NATO and Eurasia, etc. – and to promote deeper understanding of NATO in Japan.

[Results thus far]

This study group was founded in April 2008. It held 12 study group meetings in FY2008, at each of which members presented reports on their respective fields and then engaged in discussions on these. Some of the members visited NATO's headquarters in Brussels in November 2008 and exchanged views with NATO and other officials. An interim report was compiled at the end of FY2008, and study group meetings are being held in FY2009 as well to build on the research of the previous fiscal year. A report will be prepared at the end

of FY2009, and efforts will be made to widely disseminate the final results in the form of a publication.

[Study Group]

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